NUMB. 40, SATURDAY, *August* 4, 1750.

——— Nec dicet, cur ego amicum
Offendam in nugis? Hæ nugæ ſeria ducent
In mala deriſum ſemel.———

HOR.

IT has been very frequently remarked, that authors are *genus irritabile*, a *generation very eaſily put out of temper*, and that they ſeldom fail of giving proofs of their iraſcibility, upon the ſlighteſt attack of criticiſm, or the moſt gentle or modeſt offer of advice and information.

As writers have generally been moſt acquainted with one another, they have repreſented this character as chiefly prevailing among men of literature, which a more extenſive view of the world would have ſhewn them to be diffuſed through all human nature, to mingle itſelf with every ſpecies of ambition, and deſire of praiſe, and to diſcover its effects with greater or leſs reſtraint, and under diſguiſes more or leſs artful, in every place and in every condition.

THE

The quarrels of writers, indeed, are more obſerved, becauſe they neceſſarily appeal to the deciſion of the publick. Their enmities are incited by applauſes from their parties, and prolonged by treacherous encouragement for general diverſion; and when the conteſt happens to riſe high between men of genius and learning, its memory is continued for the ſame reaſon as its vehemence was at firſt promoted, becauſe it gratifies the malevolence or curioſity of readers, and relieves the vacancies of life with amuſement and laughter. The perſonal diſputes, therefore, of rivals in wit are ſometimes tranſmitted to poſterity, when the grudges and heart-burnings of men leſs conſpicuous, though carried on with equal bitterneſs, and productive of greater evils, are expoſed to the knowledge of thoſe only whom they nearly affect, and ſuffered to paſs off and be forgotten among common and caſual tranſactions.

The reſentment which the diſcovery of a fault or folly produces, muſt bear a certain proportion to our pride, and will regularly be more acrimonious as pride is more immediately the principle of action. In whatever

therefore

therefore we wiſh or imagine ourſelves to excel, we ſhall always be diſpleaſed to have our claims to reputation diſputed, and generally more diſpleaſed, if the accompliſhment be ſuch as can expect reputation only for its reward. For this reaſon it is common to find men break out into rage at any inſinuations to the diſadvantage of their wit, who have born with great patience reflections on their morals; and of women it has been always known, that no cenſure wounds ſo deeply, or rankles ſo long, as that which charges them with want of beauty.

As men frequently fill their imaginations with trifling perſuits, and pleaſe themſelves moſt with things of ſmall importance, I have often known very ſevere and laſting malevolence excited by unlucky cenſures, which would have fallen without any effect, had they not happened to wound a part remarkably tender. Guſtulus, who valued himſelf upon the nicety of his palate, diſinherited his eldeſt ſon for telling him that the wine, which he was then commending, was the ſame which he had ſent away the day before as not fit to be drunk. Proculus withdrew his kindneſs from a nephew, whom he had always conſidered as the

the moſt promiſing genius of the age, for happening to praiſe in his preſence the graceful horſemanſhip of Marius. And Fortunio, when he was privy counſellor, procured a clerk to be diſmiſſed from one of the publick offices, in which he was eminent for his ſkill and aſſiduity, becauſe he had been heard to ſay over a bottle, that there was another man in the kingdom, on whoſe ſkill at billiards he would lay his money againſt Fortunio's.

Felicia and Floretta had been bred up in one houſe, and ſhared all the pleaſures and endearments of infancy together. They entered upon life at the ſame time, and continued their confidence and friendſhip; conſulted each other in every change of their dreſs, and every admiſſion of a new lover; thought every diverſion more entertaining whenever it happened that both were preſent, and when ſeparate juſtified the conduct, and celebrated the excellencies of one another. Such was their intimacy, and ſuch their fidelity; till a birthnight approached, when Floretta took one morning an opportunity, as they were conſulting upon new cloaths, to adviſe her friend not to dance at the ball, and informed her that her performance the year before had not

anſwered the expectation which her other accompliſhments had raiſed. Felicia commended her ſincerity, and thanked her for the caution; but told her that ſhe danced to pleaſe herſelf, and was in very little concern what the men might take the liberty of ſaying, but that if her appearance gave her dear Floretta any uneaſineſs ſhe would ſtay away. Floretta had now nothing left but to make new proteſtations of ſincerity and affection, with which Felicia was ſo well ſatisfied, that they parted with more than uſual fondneſs. They ſtill continued to viſit, with this only difference, that Felicia was more punctual than before, and often declared how high a value ſhe put upon ſincerity, how much ſhe thought that goodneſs to be eſteemed which would venture to admoniſh a friend of an error, and with what gratitude advice was to be received, even when it might happen to proceed from miſtake.

In a few months Felicia, with great ſerioufneſs, told Floretta, that though her beauty was ſuch as gave charms to whatever ſhe did, and her qualifications ſo extenſive, that ſhe could not fail of excellence in any attempt, yet ſhe thought herſelf obliged by the duties of friendſhip

friendſhip to inform her, that if ever ſhe betrayed want of judgment, it was by too frequent compliance with ſolicitations to ſing, for that her manner was ſomewhat ungraceful, and her voice had no great compaſs. It is true, ſays Floretta, when I ſung three nights ago at lady Sprightly's, I was hoarſe with a cold; but I ſing for my own ſatisfaction, and am not in the leaſt pain whether I am liked. However, my dear Felicia's kindneſs is not the leſs, and I ſhall always think myſelf happy in ſo true a friend.

From this time, they never ſaw each other without mutual profeſſions of eſteem, and declarations of confidence, but went ſoon after into the country to viſit their relations. When they came back, they were prevailed on, by the importunity of new acquaintance, to take lodgings in different parts of the town, and had frequent occaſion when they met, to bewail the diſtance at which they were placed, and the uncertainty which each experienced of finding the other at home.

Thus are the fondeſt and firmeſt friendſhips diſſolved, by ſuch openneſs, and ſincerity, as interrupt our enjoyment of our own

approbation,

approbation, or recalls us to the remembrance of thoſe failings, which we are more willing to indulge than to correct.

It is by no means neceſſary to imagine, that he who is offended at advice, was ignorant of the fault, and reſents the admonition as a falſe charge; for perhaps it is moſt natural to be enraged, when there is the ſtrongeſt conviction of our own guilt. While we can eaſily defend our character, we are no more diſturbed at an accuſation, than we are alarmed by an enemy whom we are ſure to conquer; and whoſe attack, therefore, will bring us honour without danger. But when a man feels the reprehenſion of a friend ſeconded by his own heart, he is eaſily heated into reſentment and revenge, either becauſe he hoped, that the fault of which he was conſcious had eſcaped the notice of others; or that his friend had looked upon it with tenderneſs and extenuation, and excuſed it for the ſake of his other virtues; or had conſidered him as too wiſe to need advice, or too delicate to be ſhocked with reproach: or, becauſe we cannot feel without pain thoſe reflections rouſed, which we have been endeavouring to lay aſleep; and when pain has produced anger,

who would not willingly believe, that it ought to be discharged on others, rather than on himself.

The resentment produced by sincerity, whatever be its immediate cause, is so certain, and generally so keen, that very few have magnanimity sufficient for the practice of a duty, which, above most others, exposes its votaries to hardships and persecutions; yet friendship without it is of a very little value, since the great use of so close an intimacy is that our virtues may be guarded and encouraged, and our vices repressed in their first appearance by timely detection, and salutary remonstrances.

It is decreed by providence, that nothing truly valuable shall be obtained in our present state, but with difficulty and danger. He that hopes for that pleasure which is to be gained by an unrestrained communication of sentiments, must dare to hazard, by unpleasing truths, that regard which he aspires to merit. The chief rule to be observed in the exercise of this dangerous office, is to preserve it pure from all mixture of interest or vanity; to forbear admonition or reproof, when our con-

ſciences tell us that they are incited not by the hopes of reforming faults, but the deſire of ſhewing our diſcernment, or gratifying our own pride by the mortification of another. It is not indeed certain that the moſt refined caution will find a proper time, for bringing a man to the knowledge of his own failings, or the moſt zealous benevolence reconcile him to that judgment, by which they are detected; but he who endeavours only the happineſs of him whom he reproves, will always have either the ſatisfaction of obtaining or deſerving kindneſs; if he ſucceeds, he benefits his friend, and if he fails, he has at leaſt the conſciouſneſs that he ſuffers for only doing well.

NUMB. 41. TUESDAY, *Auguſt* 7, 1750.

Nulla recordanti lux eſt ingrata graviſque,
Nulla fuit cujus non meminiſſe velit.
Ampliat ætatis ſpatium ſibi vir bonus, hoc eſt
Vivere bis, vitâ poſſe priore frui.

MART.

SO few of the hours of life are filled up with objects adequate to the mind of man, and ſo frequently are we in want of pre-